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COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROCEDURES FOR EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS

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PURPOSE:

Pursuant to board policies *4400 Employees with or Who Have Been Exposed to Communicable Diseases* and *3680 Students with or Who Have Been Exposed to Communicable Diseases*, the purpose is to establish a uniform notification procedure to prevent and limit a significant communicable disease outbreak on all campuses of South Texas College.

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide a proper channel of communication to report and respond to suspected and confirmed communicable diseases.
- Safeguard the welfare of students and employees.
- Take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of students, employees, and the College community during global and local infectious disease events.
- Inform and advise the South Texas College community as needed.

SCOPE:

These procedures apply to all students, faculty, staff and visitors of South Texas College. These procedures shall be implemented for communicable diseases commonly found in the College population which can be transmitted by air, object, or through casual contact.

DEFINITIONS:

- Communicable Disease – an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxins that occurs through the direct or indirect transmission of the infectious agent or its products from an infected individual or via an animal, vector or the inanimate environment to a susceptible animal or human host. Examples of communicable diseases include, but are not limited to: Chicken Pox-Varicella, Mumps, Rubella, Measles, Rabies, Smallpox, Diphtheria, Influenza, Brucellosis, Meningitis - viral and bacterial, Tuberculosis, Hepatitis A, Anthrax, COVID-19, Sexually Transmitted Infections, and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).
- Pandemic - A geographically widespread epidemic spread over several countries or continents.
- Disinfecting - The process of using chemicals to kill or eliminate germs, including viruses, on surfaces or objects.
- Quarantine - The physical separation, for a specific period of time, of healthy people who have been exposed to an infectious disease from those who have not been exposed.
- Social Distancing - Maintaining distance between individuals in order to minimize personal contact.

REPORTING:

Many communicable diseases are required to be reported to the health authority pursuant to State of Texas Laws. The College reports reportable diseases to the local health authority in accordance with state laws.

In accordance with Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 81, Communicable Diseases, Sec. 81.002, each person shall act responsibly to prevent and control communicable disease.

Employees and students shall report communicable diseases to the following departments:

- Employees – HR Benefits
- Students – Counseling & Student Accessibility Services

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES:

Rule §97.7: [Diseases Requiring Exclusion from Campus](#)

In accordance with Texas Administrative Code, Title 25, Chapter 21, below is a list of communicable diseases requiring exclusion from campus.

Name of Disease	Vaccine Preventable	Description of Symptoms
COVID-19	Yes	<p><u>Symptoms:</u> Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.</p> <p><u>Transmission:</u> It is thought to spread mainly through close contact from person-to-person or touching contaminated objects. Some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus.</p>
Measles (Rubeola)	Yes	<p><u>Symptoms:</u> High fever, cough, runny nose, red and watery eyes, tiny white spots (Koplik spots) in mouth, or a rash.</p> <p><u>Transmission:</u> Coughing and sneezing. The virus can live up to two hours in contaminated air or on a surface.</p>
Meningitis (Bacterial)	Yes	<p><u>Symptoms:</u> Fever, headache, stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light, and confusion.</p> <p><u>Transmission:</u> Person-to-person (depends on type of bacteria).</p>
Meningitis (Viral)	No	<p><u>Symptoms:</u> Fever, headache, stiff neck, sensitivity to bright light, sleepiness, trouble waking up from sleep, nausea, irritability, vomiting, lack of appetite, or lethargy.</p> <p><u>Transmission:</u> Caused by other viruses like mumps, measles, or influenza.</p>

Name of Disease	Vaccine Preventable	Description of Symptoms
Mumps	Yes	<p><u>Symptoms:</u> Fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, loss of appetite, swollen or tender salivary glands approximately 16-18 days after infection.</p> <p><u>Transmission:</u> Coughing, sneezing, talking, sharing items, or touching contaminated objects.</p>
Norovirus	No	<p><u>Symptoms:</u> Diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, or stomach pain.</p> <p><u>Transmission:</u> Contaminated food or drink, touching contaminated surfaces and then putting fingers in mouth, or having direct contact with someone who is infected.</p>
Hepatitis A	Yes	<p><u>Symptoms:</u> Fatigue, sudden nausea and vomiting, abdominal pain or discomfort (especially on the upper right side beneath your lower ribs by your liver), clay-colored bowel movements, loss of appetite, low-grade fever, dark urine, or joint pain.</p> <p><u>Transmission:</u> Fecal-oral route (that is, when an uninfected person ingests food or water that has been contaminated with the feces of an infected person).</p>
Influenza	Yes	<p><u>Symptoms:</u> Fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue, vomiting, or diarrhea.</p> <p><u>Transmission:</u> Person-to-person via droplets.</p>
Tuberculosis	No	<p><u>Symptoms:</u> A bad cough that can last 3 weeks or longer, chest pain, or coughing up blood or sputum (mucus from deep inside the lungs).</p> <p><u>Transmission:</u> Person-to-person via droplets.</p>

Name of Disease	Vaccine Preventable	Description of Symptoms
<p>Varicella (Chicken Pox)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p><u>Symptoms:</u> Fever, tiredness, loss of appetite, headache, or itchy fluid-filled blisters.</p> <p><u>Transmission:</u> Touching or breathing in the virus particles that come from the blisters.</p>

PREPAREDNESS:

South Texas College is committed to being prepared to respond to the above identified communicable diseases at each campus.

The College coordinates with local health authorities for the prevention and control of communicable disease incidents.

Based on the severity of the communicable disease, the Crisis Management Team will be activated and determine if notice will be issued, date to issue notice, and next steps to deploy. Public Relations and Marketing and/or the STC Department of Public Safety will disseminate official notifications concerning communicable diseases on campus, as appropriate.

Based on the nature of the communicable disease incident, the Pandemic Operations Response Plan will be activated and followed accordingly.

For more information about warnings, including the methods used to disseminate emergency information about a communicable disease incident, refer to the All Hazards Emergency Plan.

PROCEDURES:

Student Exposed to or Confirmed with a Communicable Disease

To maintain a healthy and safe environment, the student will remain off campus until the risk of infecting others has ended.

1. Student must not access campus or any College facility. If already on campus, leave immediately.
2. Seek medical care, as needed.
3. It is the responsibility of the student to immediately report a suspected or confirmed communicable disease case at: studentwellbeing@southtexascollege.edu
4. The Director of Counseling and Student Accessibility Services or designee shall report to the local health department a student who has or is suspected of having a communicable disease as mandated by the Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 81, Communicable Diseases.
5. The Director of Counseling and Student Accessibility Services or designee will contact the student and instruct the student to leave campus and isolate/quarantine at home and follow public health guidelines.
 - a. The Director of Counseling and Student Accessibility Services or designee will also advise the student to contact a medical provider or local County health office to seek appropriate medical advice.

- b. The Director of Counseling and Student Accessibility Services or designee will provide the student with information on support services including educational accommodations as well as other support services.
 - c. The Director of Counseling and Student Accessibility Services or designee will notify the appropriate faculty regarding student absence.
- 6. The Director of Counseling and Student Accessibility Services or designee will notify the Office of Human Resources Benefits staff of employees exposed to suspected or confirmed student. The Office of Human Resources will follow internal protocols and provide instructions for employee to follow (*refer to B – Employees with Communicable Diseases*).
- 7. The Director of Counseling and Student Accessibility Services or designee will notify the Assistance Director for Custodial Support Services of all communicable disease incidents. Custodial personnel will clean and disinfect area (office, department, lab, classroom, etc.) per proper remediation protocols.
- 8. Before the student may return to the College, the student must present a medical release or other related documentation from his or her healthcare provider or the local county health office to the Director of Counseling and Student Accessibility Services or designee certifying the student is no longer contagious and presents no risk to the College community.

Employees Exposed to or Confirmed with a Communicable Disease

To maintain a healthy and safe environment, the employee will remain off campus until the risk of infecting others has ended.

- 1. Employee must not access campus or any College facility. If already on campus, leave immediately.
- 2. Seek medical care, as needed.
- 3. It is the responsibility of the employee to immediately report a suspected or confirmed communicable disease case at HR_Benefits@southtexascollege.edu
- 4. The Office of Human Resources Benefits staff shall report to the local health department a student who has or is suspected of having a communicable disease as mandated by the Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 81, Communicable Diseases.
- 5. The Office of Human Resources Benefits staff will contact the employee and instruct the employee to leave campus and isolate/quarantine at home and follow public health guidelines.
 - a. The Office of Human Resources Benefits staff will also advise the employee to contact a medical provider or local County health office to seek appropriate medical advice.
 - b. The Office of Human Resources Benefits staff will provide the employee with information on support services including educational accommodation as well as other support services.
 - c. The Office of Human Resources Benefits staff will notify the appropriate supervisor regarding employee absence.
- 6. The Office of Human Resources Benefits staff will notify Counseling and Student Accessibility Services of students exposed to suspected or confirmed employees. Counseling and Student Accessibility Services will follow internal protocols and provide instructions for employees to follow (*refer to A – Students with Communicable Diseases*).
- 7. The Office of Human Resources Benefits staff will notify the Assistance Director for Custodial Support Services of all communicable disease incidents. Custodial personnel

will clean and disinfect area (office, department, lab, classroom, etc.) per proper remediation protocols.

8. Before the employee may return to the College, the employee must present a medical release or other related documentation from his or her healthcare provider or the local county health office to The Office of Human Resources Benefits staff certifying the employee is no longer contagious and presents no risk to the College community.

Protected Health Information

An individual's health condition is personal and confidential, and reasonable precautions will be taken to protect information regarding an individual's health condition. All College personnel will respect the health privacy rights of all individuals and will comply with all laws regulating the confidentiality of medical information, including but not limited to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, etc.